

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
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SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER' S REMARKS AT FOREIGN PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON

1. AT ANNUAL LUNCHEON MEETING OF FOREIGN PRESS CLUB IN JERUSALEM
ON MAY 22, PM MEIR RESPONDED TO QUESTONS ABOUT NIXON- BREZHNEV
SUMMIT MEETING, PROXIMITY TALKS, AND WALDHEIM REPORT AMONG
OTHERS. FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF SOME OF HER REMARKS AS REPORTED
BY PRESS MAY 23.

2. SPEAKING OF NIXON- BREZHNEV SUMMIT MEETING, MRS MEIR SAID:
" I DON' T AT ALL THINK THAT THE MEETING BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE SOVIET COMMUNIST
PARTY, LEONID BREZHNEV, WILL RESULT IN A NEGATIVE OUTCOME FOR
ISRAEL. AS FAR AS AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD ISRAEL IS CONCERNED,
THERE ARE NO BASIC DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES
AND ISRAEL. I HAVE NO REASON FOR BELIEVING THAT PRESIDENT
NIXON WILL CHANGE HIS POLICY. ON THE OTHER HAND, I DARE HOPE
THAT MR. BREZHNEV WILL CHANGE THE POLICIES OF THE USSR
TOWARDS ISRAEL."
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3. REPLYING TO CBS CORRESPONDENT, PRIME MINISTER DENIED THAT ISRAEL HAD HESITATED IN 1971 TO BEGIN PROXIMITY TALKS WITH EGYPT OVER AEGIS OF US. EGYPT HAD NEVER AGREED TO ENTER PROXIMITY TALKS WITHOUT PRE- CONDITIONS, SHE DECLARED. SHE CONCEDED, HOWEVER, THAT ISSUE OF PROXIMITY TALKS HAD RAISED DIFFICULTIES WHICH HAD HAD TO BE CLEARED UP BETWEEN THE US AND ISRAEL.

4. REFERRING TO UN SECRETARY GENERAL' S REPORT, PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT IF WALDHEIM WISHED TO PUT UN MACHINERY AT DISPOSAL OF PARTIES IN MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE TO BRING THEM TO NEGOTIATING TABLE, THIS WAS ALL TO THE GOOD. HOWEVER, EGYPT HAD IN PAST REFUSED AMERICAN GOOD OFFICES FOR SAME PURPOSE AND UN' S PEACE- MAKING RECORD WAS NOT GREAT SUCCESS STORY. MEIR SAID ISRAEL HAD ACCEPTED ENGLISH VERSION OF RESOLUTION 242 AND WOULD NOT ACCEPT NEW ADDITIONS OR INTERPRETATIONS. SHE WENT ON TO SAY THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH JARRING' S NOTE OF FEBRUARY 1971, NOR WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY' S RATIFICATION OF IT.

5. MAIN OBSTACLE TO PEACE, ACCORDING TO PRIME MINISTER, WAS ARAB' S CONTINUED REFUSAL TO ACCEPT, OR AT LEAST ACQUIESCE IN, EXISTENCE OF STATE OF ISRAEL. " ONE THEY ACCEPT THAT, " SHE SAID, " EVERYTHING ELSE WILL FALL INTO PLACE... EVEN THE QUESTION OF BORDERS WILL BECOME ALMOST A TECHNICAL ISSUE AFTER THAT." SHE CREDITED ISRAEL' S INSISTENCE ON SECURE BORDERS TO VOLATILE NATURE OF ARAB REGIMES WHICH MIGHT REPUDIATE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS. ISRAEL THEREFORE DEMANDED BORDERS WHICH, ALTHOUGH THEY WOULD NOT BE GUARANTEE AGAINST AGRESSION, WOULD NEVETHELESS MINIMIZE LIKELIHOOD OF AGGRESSION.
ZURHELLEN

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